

HB 3515 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

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Meeting Dates: 3/30, 4/4

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows a governing body of a city with a population of greater than 600,000 to refer a ballot measure to form a parks and recreation special district. Allows the entirety of the membership of the governing body of the city to serve as the entirety of the membership of the board of directors for the district. Requires the city to receive approval by ordinance or resolution from the county in which the majority of the district lies, if the ballot measure includes a permanent rate limit for operating taxes for the proposed district. Removes existing park and recreation districts within the new districts' boundaries. Allows the governing body of a city to have all applicable powers and duties confirmed on the governing body of a county for district formed under these provisions. Allows city election procedures in place of county election procedures. Updates existing parks and recreation district board oath of office and vacancy provisions.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Special districts are a form of local government that provide specific services to specific geographic areas. Most special districts have a board of directors elected directly by the landowners and residents in the district and they act as the governing body overseeing polices and exercising all powers of the district. To fund services, the district can issue bonds, taxes, levy assessments or charge fees for their services to the population they serve.

In its fiscal year 2022-2023 analysis, the City of Portland's Budget Office recommend that the City and Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) develop a significant and multi-faceted increased funding strategy for ongoing major maintenance needs. According to PP&R they have a \$500 million major maintenance backlog, including maintenance needs in parks, swimming pools, and community centers. In 2020, Portland voters passed a five-year local option tax levy estimated to raise between \$45 to \$48 million a year for PP&R, but these funds cannot be used for addressing deferred maintenance projects. PP&R projects that if they are unable to meet deferred maintenance demands, they will need to decommission one out of every five park assets over the next 15 years.

House Bill 3515 clarifies in statute that a governing body of a city with a population of greater than 600,000 can refer a ballot measure to form a parks and recreation special district. If the ballot measure includes a permanent rate limit for operating taxes for the proposed district, it requires the city to receive approval by ordinance or resolution of the governing body of the county in which the majority of the district lies.